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TAGS: TBIO KFLU ECON PREL SOCI CASC EAGR MX GM  
SUBJECT: GERMANY H1N1 UPDATE: 6,800 CONFIRMED CASES

REF: A) Berlin 917, B) Berlin 908 and previous.

**¶1.** (U) SUMMARY: The number of H1N1 infections in Germany rose by 738 cases to a total of 6,800 on August 3. The majority of new infections occurred abroad. Doctors warn of unknown side effects of H1N1 vaccine. END SUMMARY.

**¶2.** (U) The National Reference Center for Influenza at the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) announced in its press briefing on August 3, 738 new (laboratory and non-laboratory) confirmed cases of H1N1. This increases the total number of H1N1 cases to 6,800. New cases were distributed among fifteen federal states: North Rhine-Westphalia (188), Lower-Saxony (139), Rhineland-Palatinate (103), Baden-Wuerttemberg (74), Saxony-Anhalt (35), Hesse (35), Saxony (29), Saarland (29), Berlin (25), Schleswig-Holstein (25), Bavaria (22), Bremen (14), Brandenburg (12), Thuringia (6) and Hamburg (2).

**¶3.** (U) According to RKI, the increase in the number of infections is mainly due to people returning from travel abroad (600 new cases which represents 81 percent). Newly confirmed cases include laboratory-confirmed cases of H1N1 as well as non-laboratory-confirmed cases, mainly from people who have showed symptoms after being in contact with a patient who has been tested positive at a labor for the new virus. So far, all cases are reportedly mild.

**¶4.** (U) North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) remains the German state with the highest number of virus cases among all German states with a total of 2,634, followed by Lower-Saxony (1222) and Baden-Wuerttemberg (674 cases). Less than 22 percent (1422) of all confirmed infections in Germany have resulted from domestic transmission.

#### Concerns for Vaccine Side Effects

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**¶5.** (U) Health care experts have raised concerns regarding possible side effects were a nationwide immunization campaign carried out. Although no H1N1 vaccine has yet been developed, previous experience with large scale influenza immunization programs indicates that up to one in a hundred individuals

could have a serious negative reaction to a vaccine. Given that Germany plans to obtain vaccinations for 25 million individuals, up to 250,000 of the total could suffer serious reactions to the vaccine.

Public Awareness Motivates Preventative Measures

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¶ 6. (U) A recent survey conducted by Polis/USUMA polling company for FOCUS magazine revealed that 37 percent of Germans are washing their hands more frequently hoping it will reduce the risk of getting infected with the new virus. An additional 20 percent are trying to avoid large groups of people, 16 percent are reducing the amount of hugging and kissing in greeting rituals, and 15 percent have stopped shaking hands. Half of those interviewed said they were not concerned and were not taking any specific precautionary measures against the virus.

Berlin Could See 450,000 Cases

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¶ 7. (U) Experts cautioned that a flu outbreak in Germany's capital could affect a minimum of 450,000 people if the virus spreads further in Berlin. A worse case scenario predicts half of all Berliners contracting H1N1. According to media reports, the Pandemic Influenza Plan of the Berlin health administration estimates that up to 270,000 additional medical consultations and 7700 additional hospital treatment will be required. The head of the EU Parliament Health Committee, Joe

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Leinen (SPD) said that the EU expects over one million H1N1 cases in fall, including more fatal cases.

BRADTKE